

VZCZCXYZ0002
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNR #0393 0270801
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 270801Z JAN 06
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9222
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 8156
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 4432
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 3938
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 1098
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1847
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1830
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ-3E/CCJ5//
RHMFIISS/CJTF HOA //POLAD//

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000393

SIPDIS

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USAID FOR DCHA FOR WGARVELINK; USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA,
GGOTTLIEB, MMARTY, IMCNAIRN; USAID FOR AFR/EA, JBORNS;
LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID MASS PREL AMGT ASEC KE

SUBJECT: NAIROBI BUILDING COLLAPSE: RESCUE MISSION
CONCLUDES

REF: NAIROBI 342

¶11. SUMMARY: As U.S., Israeli and British rescue teams wrapped-up their much-appreciated operations on January 26, the Kenyan government transitioned the rescue operation to recovery, with a reported three more bodies pulled from the rubble overnight. At a January 26 remembrance ceremony held at the building collapse site, the Ambassador expressed his condolences and his appreciation for the rapid and comprehensive emergency response. While highlighting bureaucratic culpability in not averting the disaster, the government pledged to pay medical and funeral expenses for victims. END SUMMARY.

RESCUE TO RECOVERY

¶12. The government of Kenya stated on January 26 that there had been 14 deaths and 105 injured individuals, as a result of the January 23 central Nairobi building collapse, but did not indicate how many people might still be missing. Media reports, however, noted that three more bodies had been pulled from the rubble during the night of January 25. Government spokesman Alfred Mutua announced a plan on January 25 to fund the funeral and medical expenses of victims as well as an initiative to establish a foundation for ongoing assistance to survivors.

RESCUERS PREPARE TO LEAVE

¶13. Marking the conclusion of the U.S., Israeli, and British rescue missions, officials organized a remembrance ceremony on January 26, at which the Ambassador expressed his condolences for the lives lost and his appreciation for the coordinated rescue effort. Officials present at the event, including Local Government Minister Musikari Kombo and Minister for Special Programs John Munyes, lavishly praised the contribution of U.S., Kenyan, Israeli, and British rescuers. The Israeli Defense Force deployed 120 personnel with the necessary equipment from their Homeland Command, which is responsible for rapid search and rescue. Under the command of Major General Gershon, the Israelis were able to organize and control the search and rescue effort. The U.S. Navy Seabees, who received extensive positive press coverage, were integrated into the effort

alongside Kenyans, Israelis, and British.

GOVERNMENT BLAMES CORRUPTION

¶4. Citing irregularities in the construction approval process, media reports on January 26 noted that Minister Kombo blamed corruption at City Hall for the accident. Speaking at the January 26 ceremony, the Minister announced that in addition to four city council members he had suspended immediately after the accident, he had recently suspended 3 more officials. Structural drawings for the building had never been properly filed, Kombo added. Minister Munyes renewed the governments pledge to put in place effective regulations and investigate those responsible for the tragedy.

BELLAMY